TUMOR
Chapter 1
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Draft 2.0

PAGE 1

PANEL 1

PAGE TITLE: CHAPTER ONE

Frank Armstrong sits in a booth at a diner in downtown Los Angeles. This is one of those places that you can feel the dirt just caked on the walls, and the grease smeared on the counters. Frank, well, he feels like he's had his fare share of mud and grease smeared on him in his day.

CAPTION
And so it goes.

CAPTION
The sad sack of sit you see sitting before you is Frank Armstrong.
(beat)
That would be me.

PANEL 2

The waitress, a hefty girl in an old fashioned apron and smock, walks up and pours coffee in his cup.

WAITRESS
How you doing Frank?
(beat)
Just about done?

CAPTION
Frankly, yeah, I was. I've been up and down the shit stained roads of life for damn near fifty five years...
(break)
And all I got to show for it is aches and pains and headaches and the ringing in my goddamn ears.

PANEL 3

Frank pulls an individually wrapped package of aspirin out of his pocket. The package reads ASPRIN.

FRANK
Yeah, Linda. Yeah. Just about.

CAPTION
The headaches have been getting worse.
(beat)
Ominous shit, right? Where's this
feeble fuck's story going to go, right?

PANEL 4

Close on him, he tosses the pills into his mouth.

CAPTION
To me getting what I probably deserve,
that's where.
(beat)
For all the hurt and pain I inflicted
on those around me.
(beat)
But that ain't quite yet.
(break)
See, this, right here?

PANEL 5

From the side, he washes it down with the putrid coffee.

CAPTION
This is where it all goes wrong.

PAGE 2

PANEL 1

Sitting across from Frank is a large square man, in a tight fitting shirt. He's got tattoos down his arm, and small sunglasses pressed tight to his face. He's got a tattooed tear on his cheek. This is Adrian.

ADRIAN
Hello, Frank.

PANEL 2

Frank spills his coffee.

FRANK
Fuck me!

PANEL 3

He pads himself down with some paper napkins, trying to get the coffee stain off his pants.

FRANK
Scared the shit out of me.
(beat)
These are new pants.
(beat)
Newish.
(beat)
What the fuck you want Adrian?

PANEL 4

Adrian smiles that hyena smile of his.

ADRIAN
Our friend needs to see you.

PANEL 5

Frank stares at Adrian, uninterested in hearing any more.

FRANK
Our friend, ain't 'our' friend. He's your friend. Hell, he can be anybody's friend, but he sure as shit ain't my friend.

PAGE 3

PANEL 1

They sit in the booth staring at each other.

PANEL 2

Adrian reclines, putting his arm up on the back of the booth and spreading out.

ADRIAN
What went wrong with you, Frank? You seem like you were such a smart man.

PANEL 3

Frank leans forward to Adrian.

CAPTION
I had a pithy comeback just waitin' for him.
(break)
But it didn't come...

PANEL 4

SMALL PANEL - We're extremely close, inside Frank's brain on two single neurons. They're firing electricity shooting back and forth between them.

CAPTION
See, right then, somethin' happened. Like a short circuit in my brain.

PANEL 5

SMALL PANEL - On Frank, his body in a spasm from the seizure rocking through his body. The words seem to dribble out of his mouth, filling the entire panel, as though he can't stop saying it.

FRANK (BROKEN DIALOGUE)
i'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'md
onei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei
'mdone.

PANEL 6

SMALL PANEL - The seizure ends, Frank slumps back, his body exhausted.

CAPTION
The doc told me I was lucky I didn't slip into a coma right there and then.

PAGE 4

PANEL 1

Back in the wide, Adrian, wide eyed, stares at Frank, horrified by what he just saw.

ADRIAN
What the fuck was that?

FRANK
...

PANEL 2

Adrian stands up.

ADRIAN
We gotta get you to a hospital or-

FRANK
Don't tell me what I gotta-

ADRIAN
You just freaked the fuck-

PANEL 3

On Frank, determination in his eyes.

FRANK
Just take me to your boss so he can kill me already.

PANEL 4

Medium on Adrian as he stares at Frank.

ADRIAN
Man, you're one screwed up old man, Frank.

PANEL 5

Wide of the whole table as Frank pushes himself up. He's wiping the drool of his face.

FRANK
Yeah, well, man's gotta get work, right?

PAGE 5

PANEL 1

Adrian's modern muscle car powers through the industry lined streets just outside of Downtown Los Angeles.

CAPTION
I don't remember getting in the car or most of the drive there.
(beat)
If we talked it was probably about nothing.
(beat)
All I remember was thinkin' that this was the end.
(beat)
This is the story of how I was gonna die.

PANEL 2

The car pulls into a warehouse with a vaguely asian theme. Out front is sign in that chinese restaurant font, with two dragons on either side of it, that read PEKING NOODLE COMPANY, LOS ANGELES, CA.

CAPTION
And knowin' me, it wouldn't be Adrian or his boss that did it.
(beat)
Somethin' in my head would go 'pop' and I'd shit my pants and drop dead.
(beat)
Frank Armstrong, shitty drawered private investigator, found dead at the fucking Peking Noodle Company in Downtown Los Angeles.

ADRIAN (OFF)
We're here.

PANEL 3

Inset panel, Frank pushes open the door.

PANEL 4

As he pushes himself up, he uses the door to steady himself.

PANEL 5

His hand slides off the door and he tumbles to the ground.

CAPTION (LESS DISTORTED)
"We believe there's a malignant growth that started on your temporal lobe."

PANEL 6

He's on the ground, staring upward...

CAPTION (EVEN LESS DISTORTED)
"It controls your hearing, memory..."

PAGE 6

SPLIT PAGE

On the left side, we see Frank on the ground, nearly catatonic. On the right side, we see Frank on a hospital bed. Together, the two different Frank's form one single Frank.

Hospital Bed Frank wears a hospital gown and has a tube up his nose pumping oxygen.

CAPTION (LOWER RIGHT CORNER)
And just like that, I'm here.
(beat)
It's tomorrow.
(beat)
Or... hold on...

PAGE 7

PANEL 1

Standing above Frank is Dr. Levine. He's in his early 30's and looks too young to be a doctor.

DR. LEVINE
Did we lose you for a second there?

FRANK
Whatsgoingonon...

PANEL 2

The doctor listens to Frank's heart through a stethoscope.

DR. LEVINE
You're going to be a bit disoriented from the medication, and the swelling.

FRANK
Wherethefucking-

PANEL 3

He sits bolt upright in bed, disoriented and confused. He pushes the doctor out of the way.

FRANK

Somethingswron-

DR. LEVINE
MR. ARMSTRONG! CALM DOWN!

PANEL 4

He pulls on the tube up his nose.

DR. LEVINE
I NEED HELP OVER HERE!

PANEL 5

Another hand is on Frank's.

PAGE 8

PANEL 1

The hand belongs to a middle-aged nurse. She and the Doctor struggle to keep Frank in his bed.

NURSE
Calm down, Mr. Armstrong-

DR LEVINE
He's disoriented we need to sedate him.

NURSE
But the risk of coma...

PANEL 2

Frank's face is pulled into a rictus of terror and anger, the nurse is trying to keep his hands down and off the tube, as she call for help.

FRANK
Fuckinassshit-

DR. LEVINE
We don't have any other option-

NURSE
ORDERLIES!

PANEL 3

The bed is swarmed with orderlies, holding Frank down.

CAPTION
Time bent. 20 seconds ago, I was standing outside a noodle factory with a convicted felon, and now I'm here.

PANEL 4

Restraints are pulled from underneath the bed. The Dr. reaches for a hypodermic needle.

CAPTION
That's one of the symptoms, they say. Time becomes fluid.

PANEL 5

From across the room, we see the scene of Frank being tied down.

CAPTION
And your sense start to change.

PAGE 9

PANEL 1

The first nurse, smiles at Frank, as the Doctor prepares to shoot him in the arm, in between the restraints that now hold his arm down.

NURSE
It's okay, Mr. Armstrong, really.
(beat)
We just want to put you out for a little while longer.

PANEL 3

On Frank's face, as she injects him, he's still tense and angry.

FRANK
shitersome-

PANEL 4

Same - His face softens, slackening from the drugs.

FRANK
kinda-

PANEL 5

The world is white, Frank is out.

FRANK
assholes.

PAGE 10

PANEL 1

Frank is back on the ground, with Adrian helping him up.

ADRIAN
Easy, man. Don't break a hip or nothing.

FRANK
What the fuck...

PANEL 2

Frank's back on his feet, he's shakey, but, better.

CAPTION
You lose time. That's one of the symptoms.

ADRIAN
Aight, come on.

CAPTION
I already said that, didn't I?

PANEL 3

They walk slowly.

CAPTION
This is the dead man's walk.
(beat)
Being lead by a man like Adrian to meet with a man like Gibson in a place like this.

PANEL 4

Big Wide Panel, we see the ramshackle warehouse, the peeling sign that reads PEKING NOODLE FACTORY below the very same in Chinese.

CAPTION
No.
(break)
I said this before. All of this.
We've done this.
(break)

Haven't we...?

PAGE 11

PANEL 1

Big, super wide angle. Inside the entirely empty factory, there's a plastic folding table set up. Sitting at it is GIBSON ATWATER, one of the wealthiest and most successful criminals in modern day Los Angeles.

GIBSON
Hello, Frank.

PANEL 2

Medium Shot - Frank stand opposite Gibson at the table.

FRANK
I got a bitch of a headache, Gibson. I need to take some aspirin.
(beat)
'less you're planning on killing me, in which case, I might as well skip it, right?

PANEL 3

EXTREME Close up on Gibson's smile.

GIBSON
It's been a long time you old piece of shit.

PANEL 4

Frank relieved, pulls out another single wrapped apsirin.

FRANK
You're going to talk first THEN kill me? Can't we just-

PANEL 5

On Gibson, as he sits back.

GIBSON
I'm not going to kill you, Frank.
(beat)
I want to hire you.

PAGE 12

PANEL 1

Frank throws the pills in his mouth.

PANEL 2

Close on Frank's throat, as he swallows the pills dry.

PANEL 3

On Frank's face.

FRANK
Hire me? Nah, I'm retired.

PANEL 4

Gibson tosses a picture across the table.

GIBSON
My baby girl. Evelyn.
(beat)
Not a baby girl anymore, no.
(beat)
She's gone.

PANEL 5

Frank stares at the photograph. She's beautiful, maybe twenty years old... she looks like Lisa Bonet back in the day.

GIBSON
You find my Evey, tell me who took her, and then I pay you.

FRANK
Then you kill them.

GIBSON
Business is business. Family ain't.

PAGE 13

PANEL 1

Frank pushes himself up from the chair.

FRANK
Pass, man. Sorry.
(beat)
I mean, you reap what you sow, y'know?

PANEL 2

Gibson sits back, his hands folded on his stomach.

GIBSON
Yeah, you're the one throwing stones.
(beat)
Asshole.

PANEL 3

Frank keeps walking, Gibson in the background, unmoving.

GIBSON
She's innocent. Got nothing to do with business.
(beat)
She's going to college, gonna make something of herself.
(beat)
Was going to.

PANEL 4

Frank stops at the door, and looks back, the harsh light from outside, drowns him in shadows.

FRANK
Ten grand for the week.

PANEL 5

Gibson, still sitting in the same position.

GIBSON
Five grand. Ten grand if we get her back alive.
(beat)
Adrian'll pay you in the car.

PAGE 14

PANEL 1

The sunlight overtakes Frank-

FRANK
Fine.

PANEL 2

White.

PANEL 3

From the white, shapes start to come out... The distant shape of a hospital room and Frank laying in bed, tube up his nose, gown and hat still in place.

DR. LEVINE (DRIFTY)
Mr. Armstrong?

PANEL 4

This should be the same shot, only we're refocused. Frank's eyes are still heavy, barely open.

CAPTION
Time becomes fluid.
(beat)
That's one of the symptoms.

PAGE 15

PANEL 1

From Frank's bleary eyed POV, Dr. Levine sits quietly next to him flipping through a metal chart.

DR. LEVINE
I know you're probably disoriented, Mr. Armstrong. The surgery-

FRANK (OFF)
Surgery...?

DR. LEVINE
The biopsy went well.

PANEL 2

Same shot, the doctor snaps his fingers in front of Frank's face.

PANEL 3

The doctor sits back.

DR. LEVINE
Frank, I know this is hard to understand, but, please, stay calm.
(beat)
You have a glioblastoma multiforme on your right temporal lobe.

FRANK
whatthefuckdoesthatmean?

PANEL 4

We're back in the car, Adrian snaps his fingers in Frank's face.

ADRIAN
Hey. Asshole.

SFX
snap snap

PAGE 16

PANEL 1

Frank snaps out of it. The sun has set.

FRANK
Shit, I'm sorry. I just...
(beat)
Where are we?

ADRIAN
Your place. Get out.

PANEL 2

Frank pushes open the car door.

FRANK
Alright, I'll...
(beat)
Jesus. What's...
(beat)
see you around-

PANEL 3

Frank walks away from the car, and Adrian leans out.

ADRIAN
Hey! ASSHOLE!

PANEL 4

Frank turns back.

PANEL 5

Adrian's hand holds a wad of cash out the window.

CAPTION
I didn't know what was wrong with me.
(beat)
Maybe I did. I dunno.
(beat)
Am I here or am I there? Am I...

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PANEL 1

Inside Frank's 'office.' Which is really just a dingey one room apartment with a bevelled glass front door, upon which we can see the reverse side of his name written in peeling paint and the words "Investigative Services" all in blocky black letters. The lights are off in the office, but on in the hallway. The door is open just a crack.

CAPTION
I used to just work here.

PANEL 2

Closer on the glass, we see Frank's outline on the other side of the glass.

CAPTION
I used to have clients.
(beat)
Ones that weren't drug dealers and gun smugglers.

PANEL 3

From low and behind Frank, we see that the door is slightly open.

CAPTION
Not locked.
(beat)
Dammit.

PANEL 4

He reaches into his jacket as if to grab his gun, as he sighs heavily.

CAPTION
I check for a gun
(beat)
There hasn't been one there since I lost my license.
(beat)
But I still check.

PANEL 5

He pushes the door open with his hand, gently.

PAGE 18

PANEL 1

Sitting in Frank's chair, smoking a cigarette is Detective James Polish (like the nationality, not the stuff you put on your nails.) Polish looks to be a few years senior to Frank, and probably shouldn't be a detective anymore. There's more to that story that we'll get back to. On the desk in front of him is a whiskey on the rocks, double. The bottle (it's some canadian shit brand) sits proudly next to the glass.

POLISH
What you gonna do, Frankie? Shoot me with your finger?

PANEL 2

Frank is relieved, and not particularly startled.

FRANK
Why you breakin' in to my place, Jimmy?

POLISH
Yeah, well, I figured you wouldn't mind.

FRANK
What do you want, Detective?

PANEL 3

Polish puts out his cigarette in an ashtray on the desk.

POLISH
Your missing girl case.

FRANK
How did you-

POLISH
Atwater's on our watch list.
(beat)
The guy's a drug dealing piece of shit, Frank. Of course we keep watch on him.

PANEL 4

Frank sits on a raggedy ass couch against the wall.

FRANK
So this missing girl case...

POLISH
You should steer clear.

FRANK
Already been paid.

PANEL 5

Close on Polish, he smiles.

POLISH
What do you need money for, Frank?

PAGE 19

PANEL 1

Frank smiles a wearey smile.

FRANK
Figured this place could use some new curtains.
(beat)
Anything else?

PANEL 2

Polish guzzles down his drink.

PANEL 3

He smiles at Frank, as he stands by the door.

POLISH
If you're gonna look for her, start at Stank on Sunset.

FRANK
Stank? What the fuck-

POLISH
Used to be the Skylight. Her boyfriend works there.
(beat)
Name's Roland.

PANEL 4

From the hallway, Frank stands inside his office, talking to Polish through the open door.

FRANK
Why you tellin' me all this if you want me to keep clear?

POLISH
We had the girl and we threw her out. Didn't feel right, but there ain't shit we can do to change it. Maybe you can.
(beat)
Just be careful. These aren't good

people.

FRANK
Neither are we.

PAGE 20

PANEL 1

Frank stands in the small closet-like kitchen. He stands staring into the light of the fridge.

CAPTION
These are night people.
(beat)
I used to be one of them.

PANEL 2

From inside the fridge, of Frank. The fridge is more or less empty, aside from a few cans of Pabst here and there.

CAPTION
Before I got old. Before I lost my place in the world. Before I became who I became.
(beat)
Feeling nostalgic, I suppose.

VOICE (OFF)
FRANK! COME TO BED!

PANEL 3

Frank carries a beer as he crosses the room.

PANEL 4

He stands inside a second room, just at the door. We can't see who's laying inside.

FRANK
Hey, baby. Miss me?

PANEL 5

Laying naked in bed, the sheets just barely covering her curvy, latin frame, is ROSA. She looks maybe 22, and has wild eyes filled with love for Frank.

ROSA
Every single minute you're gone.
(beat)
Ven aca, papi.

CAPTION

This isn't happening. This happened before.

PAGE 21

PANEL 1

Silouhette, as Frank mounts her. The panel should seem to shake, melt, and lose shape as it reaches the right side of the page, as though the memory is dripping away and into-

CAPTION
I think this happened before.

CAPTION
But I could be wrong.

PANEL 2

Frank sits at his desk, startled awake.

FRANK
whatthefuckwhereami-

PANEL 3

Sitting on his desk, staring at him, is a picture of Rosa.

FRANK
That was nice, baby-doll.

PANEL 4

Close on his eyes, staring at the picture.

CAPTION
The things we do to the people we love.

PAGE 22

PANEL 1

Frank pulls out the picture of Evelyn (Atwater's daughter.)

FRANK
C'mon little girl. Let's get you found.

PANEL 2

Frank pushes himself up.

PANEL 3

His hand slips off the desk -

PANEL 4

His head BANGS on the desk.

PANEL 5

BIG PANEL - From above - Frank lays in a pile on the ground.

FRANK
Goddammit, what's wrong with me...